

# The Review Crew



## Early Elementary

### Fiction

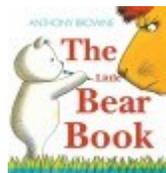
#### The Little Bear Book

Written and Illus. by Anthony Browne

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 978076367007

Curriculum: *Bear; Drawing; Imagination*



Little Bear goes for a walk with his magic pencil. He meets a grumpy gorilla and draws a teddy bear for him. He meets a noisy crocodile and draws a trumpet for him. He draws a crown for the lion and a mouse for the elephant. Then he draws a bear shaped door for him to go through and tells all good-bye. This is cute little book showing the power of imagination as bear draws his way out of trouble with his magic pencil. The colorful illustrations really add to the story. It can be used as a read aloud, or to start a drawing project.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

#### Good Dream, Bad Dream

Written and illus. by: Juan Falle and Serena Valentino

Immedium, 2014

ISBN: 9781597021036

Curriculum: *Dreams; Heroes*



Julio checks his room each night for the monsters that try to invade his dreams. His wise Papa encourages him to counteract the monsters by summoning the heroes of history and world literature to help him. There are always knights to battle dragons and witches, an Artemis to combat

mythological beasts, and even Super-Mom to fight pollution, injustice, and war. Julio bravely sees even the superhero in himself, able to slay his fears so he can sleep soundly. Delightful animated illustrations vividly depict a diverse array of creatures and warriors from many traditions. This handsome bilingual book can be used for discussion with young ones on overcoming fear.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Alumni

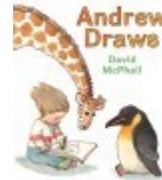
#### Andrew Draws

Written and illus. by: David McPhail

Holiday House, 2014

ISBN: 9780823430635

Curriculum: *Drawing; Art; Power of imagination*



Andrew finds a crayon under the sofa and begins to discover a growing love for drawing. As he practices, his drawings become more and more real until finally, he can create almost anything through his drawing. He begins to solve many of the world's problems with his powerful gift, creating food for the hungry, homes for the homeless, and hospitals for the sick. Finally, he draws something for himself, a little dog to keep him company. Charming illustrations accompany each page.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South H.S.



Brought to you by the  
Denver Public Schools  
Book Review  
Committee.

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### Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

### What we do!

- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

### I'm My Own Dog

Written and illus. by:  
David Ezra Stein  
Candlewick Press, 2014  
ISBN:  
9780763661397

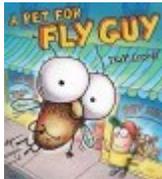


*Curriculum: Dogs; humor; friendship*  
This is a charming picture book written from the perspective of the dog who stubbornly takes care of himself. Until one day when he realizes he can't quite reach a spot on his back that needs scratching. So he approaches a friendly human and soon begins to see himself as the owner of his new human friend. He teaches his human how to throw a ball correctly so that he can fetch it, learns to clean up after his human friend when he spills food, and has him hold a leash so that the dog can lead his human around. They are best friends! Cartoon-like illustrations add to the whimsical story of the dog and his human.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South H.S.

### A Pet For Fly Guy

Written and illus. by: Tedd Arnold  
Orchard Books, 2014  
ISBN: 9780545316156  
Curriculum: *Friendship; Pets; Flies*



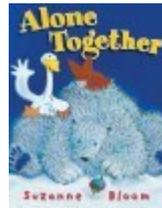
Buzz has a pet fly, named Fly Guy! Fly Guy is the best pet in the world, but Fly Guy needs a pet of his own. What would make a perfect pet for Fly Guy? His friend Buzz of course! Fly Guy is back in this story with a unique twist on friendship.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



### Alone Together

Written and Illus. by:  
Suzanne Bloom  
Boyd Mills Press, 2014  
ISBN:  
9781620917367



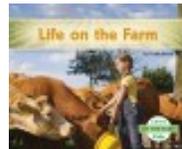
*Curriculum: Friends*  
Fox, Goose and Bear are friends. Sometimes Bear just needs to have some time alone. Fox wants to be alone with Bear and Goose doesn't want to be alone, alone! Sometimes you just have to be alone... together. The illustrations will make every reader want to bring Bear home with them, and quite possibly his friends Goose and Fox also. This is an adorable story filled with character. Young readers will want to hear it over and over.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College

## Early Elementary Nonfiction

### Life on the Farm

By: Teddy Borth  
ABDO, 2015  
ISBN:  
9781629700533



*Curriculum: Farms; Life on a farm; Farm chores*  
Farmers have many chores to do on the farm each day. They must gather eggs, milk the cow, feed and water the animals, mend fences, and clean out stalls. Each page contains simple sentences of facts with a related photograph, making it an ideal book to use for research with beginner readers.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



## Upper Elementary Fiction

### Brown Bear's Dream

By: Yun Yeong Kim  
Illus. by: KyeMahn Kim  
Norwood House Press,  
2014  
ISBN:  
9781599536460



*Curriculum: Bears; Beavers; Swimming; Goals; Plans*  
Brown Bear woke up from his winter sleep. He sat on the river bank and enjoyed watching the beavers swim. He wanted to swim too. Bear has a dream of going to the sea. He heard the river goes there, and maybe he can learn to swim. Grandfather Beaver helped him set goals for each month, so that he would be ready to swim in July. Each month, he worked on a goal. At last July came and they got in the river and swam towards the sea. He found the sea and it was more beautiful than he imagined. "I did it!" Bear yelled. This is a good story to introduce goal setting to children. Illustrations are well done, and Bear must overcome adversity and be brave. It is appropriate for elementary students and would make a good start for discussions.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### Winterfrost

By: Michelle Houts  
Candlewick Press, 2014  
ISBN:  
9780763665654

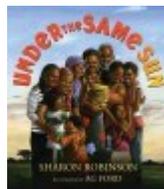


*Curriculum: Fantasy; Adventure; Danish folklore; Holidays*  
As a beautiful winter frost has covered the Danish countryside, twelve-year old Bettina's par-

ents must tend to a family emergency leaving Bettina to care for her baby sister, Pia. She believes she can handle all the chores for the family but neglects to leave the traditional bowl of rice pudding out for the nisse, a gnome who watches over the family. In a rage, the nisse trashes the barn and takes baby Pia, setting Bettina on an adventure to find her missing sister. This is a beautiful and magical story, where the point of view changes each chapter from character to character. Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon Steck Elem.

**Under the Same Sun**

By: Sharon Robinson  
 Illus. by: Ag Ford  
 Scholastic Press, 2014  
 ISBN:  
 9780545166720

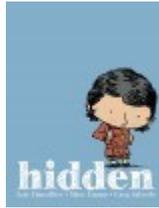


*Curriculum: African American grandmothers; Birthdays; Safaris; Families; Tanzania*  
 It is Grandmother's 85th birthday and it has been many years since she has flown all the way from America to visit family in Tanzania. As the family spends time together, they bond through storytelling, trips to the market, and a surprise safari for Bibi's birthday. As the visit nears its conclusion, a trip to the ruins of an old slave trading post reminds them of the past and how fortunate they are to enjoy freedoms denied their ancestors. Vivid, realistic paintings set the mood for this beautiful title that emphasizes the importance of family. Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen TJ H.S.



**Hidden**

By: Loïc Dauvillier;  
 Illus. by: Marc Lizano  
 First Second, 2012  
 ISBN:  
 9781596438736

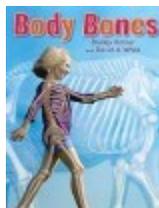


*Curriculum: Holocaust survivors; France; Grandparent and child*  
 After awaking late one night to find her grandmother crying, Elsa attempts to comfort her. Grandmother Dounia begins to tell Elsa a story that she has never shared. When Dounia was Elsa's age she lived in Paris. She had to wear a star. At first being a 'sheriff' was fun, until she realized that everyone hated her because of the star she wore. Then a day came when Dounia was made to hide. When she emerged, she found that her mother and father had disappeared. Told from a child's perspective, this title is age appropriate, thoughtful, and supported by evocative images. Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen TJ H.S.



**Body Bones**

By: Shelley Rotner  
 Illus. by: David A. White  
 Holiday House, 2014  
 ISBN: 978-0823431625



*Curriculum: Bones; Skeletal system;*

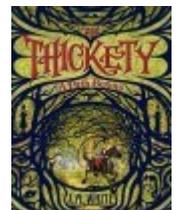
*Animals; Humans*

Children learn about the skeletal systems of humans and a variety of animals through detailed photographs and illustrations that show both the body as a whole and through its underlying skeletal structure. The author does an excellent job of explaining the necessity of one's skeletal system in a way that children will understand - it is the frame that holds us up, just as the frame of a building holds the entire structure in place. Finally readers will learn about the importance of taking care of one's body by avoiding broken bones and maintaining healthy eating habits. A glossary and index complement the text to allow early researchers an introduction to referencing information. Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer South H.S.



**The Thickety: A Path Begins**

By: J. A. White  
 Illus. by: Andrea Offer, amm  
 Katherine Tegen Books, 2014  
 ISBN: 9780062257246



*Curriculum: Magic; Witchcraft*  
 In Kara's tiny village, the inhabitants fear two things... the Thickety where the evil Sordyr lives and magic. Kara's mother was killed for being a witch, and the villagers believe Kara is, too. When Kara finds her mother's spell book, this confirms for her that she is, but the town leader's wicked daughter wants the book as well and will stop at nothing to get it. A bit dark but fun, this MS book will grab readers' attention. A

creepy twist ending sets up the sequel due out in March.  
Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### Minion

By: John David Anderson  
Walden Pond Press,  
2014

ISBN: 9780062133113  
*Curriculum: Superheroes; Families*

Since there have always been superheroes around Michael Morn's town, it's not unusual that he has the ability to control minds. Michael and his adoptive father, an inventor who lives below the radar, use their talents on the shady side to get by unnoticed. But a couple of unexpected super powers have shown up in New Liberty: The Dictator, who wants to expose and use Michael to manipulate the town, and The Comet, who streaks in to foil the bad guys. There's also the elusive and exotic Viola who seems to be everywhere. How can Michael protect the masked lifestyle of his family? An introspective and humorous character, plot twists and a little romance make this an exciting read for middle schoolers.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Alumni



### I Kill the Mockingbird

By: Paul Acampora  
Roaring Brook Press,  
2014

ISBN: 9781596437425  
*Curriculum: Harper Lee; To Kill a Mockingbird; Friendship*

Eighth grader Lucy's favorite teacher dies next to her in the cafeteria line after letting the class know that he would assign her favorite book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as summer read-



ing. Lucy and her best friends Elena and Michael hatch a creative plot known as the "I Kill the Mockingbird" conspiracy to get as many people as possible to read it. A quirky, fun read sure to please literary and savvy social-media types!

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco  
Skinner M.S.

## Middle School Nonfiction

### Photos Framed

By: Ruth Thomson  
Candlewick Press, 2013  
ISBN: 9780763671549  
*Curriculum: Historical photographs; Photography*

27 photographs dating back from the present to 1844 are presented in this title. Some are of historical significance. Others have been included for their vivid imagery. Each photograph has a story to tell. The author uses these images to explore the art of photography, discuss the photographers' impetus for their creations, and prompt readers to question what they see as they look more closely at the details of each photograph. An interesting title for exploring photography as an art form, as well as its capacity for documenting history.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.



### Hades Speaks

By: Vicky Alvear Shecter  
Illus. by: J. E. Larson  
Boyd's Mills Press, 2014  
ISBN: 9781620915981  
*Curriculum: Mythology, Greek; Gods; Goddesses; Ancient History*



Hades himself, Lord of the Underworld, takes readers on an irreverent and macabre tour of his domain. Snarkily dishing on his mythological family members, Hades gives young readers a fun and accurate introduction to the ancients while the black ink illustrations enhance the morbid tone.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco  
Skinner M.S.

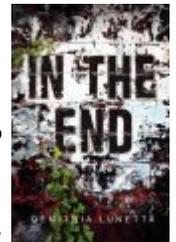
## High School Fiction

### In the End

By: Demitria Lunetta  
HarperTeen, 2014  
ISBN: 9780062105486  
*Curriculum: Survival; Apocalypse; Monsters*

In a desperate attempt to locate and rescue Baby from human experimentation, Amy must escape a new Florae survival camp nightmare of her own and find her way back to New Hope. This apocalyptic sequel to *In the After* maintains the level of horrors and action its predecessor delivered. A must read for those that read the first book.

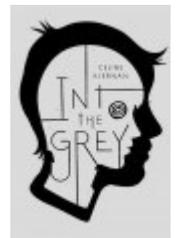
Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.



### Into the Grey

Written by: Celine Kiernan  
Candlewick Press, 2014  
ISBN: 9780763670610  
*Curriculum: Coming of Age; Horror/Ghost Stories; Family*

After their grandmother, who suffers from dementia, accidentally burns down their house, the Finnerlys move to a musty old cottage on the coast. The family doesn't realize



a spirit resides within the home, especially in the brothers' room. Dom and Patrick Finnerty, fifteen year-old twin brothers, experience terrible nightmares, strange sightings, and paranormal activity. Can the brothers keep each other safe? Kiernan creates more than just a dark and haunting ghost story. It's a tale of family, loss, and the need to protect the ones we love. Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon Steck Elem.

**The Things You Kiss Goodbye**

By: Leslie Connor  
Katherine Tegan  
Books, 2014  
ISBN:  
9780060890919  
*Curriculum: Families;  
Abusive relationships;  
Friendship*



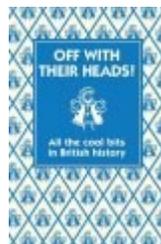
Bettina is powerless against the strict rules in her Greek household until, surprisingly, she meets Brady, the school basketball star. He charms her father into letting her go out with him instead of straight home after school. Their relationship is sweet and slow during the summer months. But when school starts Brady seems to change before her eyes. Brady is still her ticket to getting out of the house so she ignores the cruelty that is suddenly his way of dealing with her. Here is an honest look at relationship violence and how it can consume a life. Some sexual and violent content, in context with the story line, will make this most appropriate in a high school setting. Reviewed by: Chris Coble CEC Middle College



**High School Nonfiction**

**Off With Their Heads! All the Cool Bits in British History**

By: Martin Oliver  
Illus. by: Andrew Pinder  
Buster Books, 2013  
ISBN: 9781780551340  
*Curriculum: British history;  
Satire*



Readers will love the brutal honesty and gore of the facts presented in this book. The cartoon-like illustrations complement each section, making it digestible for younger readers. Did you know that the Black Death of 1348 was actually caused by bacteria living in the bloodstream of rats which then infected humans, causing 1/3 of England's population to perish? The pirate Blackbeard was known to cut off his victim's fingers in order to steal their rings! Elizabeth I took only four baths a year and had 2000 dresses in her closet when she died! The book covers history spanning from the Ice Age to modern times written in a style sure to stimulate most young adult readers.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer South H.S.



**Review Crew Staff**

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**Karen Shannon**  
**Antonio Nicotera**

**Strike: The farm workers' fight for their rights**

By: Larry Dane Brimner  
Calkins Creek, 2014  
ISBN: 9781590789971

*Curriculum: Civil Rights; Mexican Americans; Biography; Geography & Cultures*



The Delano grape workers' strike in 1965 brought to the forefront the need for better wages, better working conditions and better living conditions for thousands of migrant workers in California with no voice. This is the story of how leaders Larry Itliong, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, organized and shaped the movement to lead the workers to protest, strike and march for their rights. An excellent in-depth resource told through photographs, maps and other primary resources.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez  
North H.S.

**Frida & Diego: art, love, life**

By: Catherine Reef  
Clarion, 2014  
ISBN:

9780547821849  
*Curriculum: Art; Biography; Mexican History; US History*



Chronicling the lives of Frida and Diego this book opens with their respective births and details their early lives, relationships, politics and most importantly their development as artists. Over a period of time, these two artists created a legacy that defined them and Mexico's art. A timeline, archival photos and full color reproductions make this a comprehensive resource for those interested in the artists.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez  
North H.S.

# Winter Folklore

## Information for December:

The name 'December' is believed to derive from the Latin word for 'ten' which is 'decem' so the name literally means the 'tenth month' and last month in the Roman calendar. The Saxons called December 'winter-monat' or winter month and 'heligh-monat' or holy month from the fact that Christmas fell within it. Native Americans called December 'cold moon'. December 21st of December is the date of the winter solstice, when the sun reaches the tropic of cancer.

December's flowers are poinsettias for the English, narcissus (or Daffodils) for Canada and hellebore for the Irish.

In Celtic traditions, this was a time to keep light alive in the darkness, to maintain the burning fires and a time for families to reunite as the light began to return following the winter solstice.

December's colors are beige, bronze, denim blue, indigo, rich purple, red and violet.

December's birthstone is the turquoise.

# Picture Books in Winter

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Summer fading, winter comes--  
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,  
Window robins, winter rooks,  
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone  
Nurse and I can walk upon;  
Still we find the flowing brooks  
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,  
Wait upon the children's eye,  
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,  
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are  
Seas and cities, near and far,  
And the flying fairies' looks,  
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,  
Happy chimney-corner days,  
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,  
Reading picture story-books?

